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Congress of the United States
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AND ENVIRONMENT

July 13, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

I write to express my profound concern regarding recent changes to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The decision to eliminate exemptions for certain international students taking online-only university courses is reckless, as many universities are moving fall classes online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I urge you to immediately reconsider and ultimately reverse this unnecessary and self-defeating decision before the upcoming fall semester begins.

Even as your department's new SEVP policies have the potential to affect more than 1 million international students nationwide, I am deeply troubled by the impact this policy will have on my district and my state. New York State had nearly 25,000 international students enrolled during the 2018-2019 school year, the second-most of any state in the country. In addition to these students' contributions to the classroom, which enrich the learning experiences of all, international students made significant financial contributions to my state—a sum totaling \$5.3 billion last academic year.

These numbers fail to capture the human costs of DHS' decision. By prohibiting nonimmigrant student F-1 and M-1 visa holders taking online classes from entering the U.S.—and requiring any of these students already in the country to leave—DHS has unnecessarily upended not only the educational plans of many international students, but also risked their deportation. Moreover, by requiring F-1 and M-1 visa holders to leave the country immediately if their universities opt for online classes mid-semester, these policies could force students to pack their bags and leave the country on extremely short notice during a public health emergency.

Again, I ask that you reconsider and reverse these changes. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress